

THE FLUME

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Park County History

The Benders and Hammonds

Part five By Flip Boettcher Correspondent

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Bender Ranch Oct. 13, 1895 with Dick's Peak in the background The Bender family and friends enjoying an afternoon outside at home. (From left to right) are: Hannah Elizabeth Bender, Annie and John's third child, holding a cat; in front of Hannah is Annie Taylor, Hannah Elizabeth's niece; unknown man holding a cat; Mary Catherine Bender Taylor, Annie and John's second child, who was recently widowed so she is dressed in black; James Edgar "Ed" Rogers holding the donkey who was soon to marry Mary

Catherine; family matriarch Hannah Hammond; William "Bill" Hammond, Annie's brother, holding Olive Taylor; Annie Bender; John Bender; and Martin Bender holding the horse, Annie and John's son. (Photo courtesy of Doug Stiverson)

In 1890, Martin Bender, John and Annie's son, would have been 21 years old and was probably a big help on the ranch. John Bender's mother-in-law, family matriarch Hannah Hammond, was living right nextdoor to the ranch house in her homestead cabin, which is still standing today. Hannah was postmistress when the ranch was a stage stop before the Kester post office started in 1874 with Job Kester Sweet as postmaster.

April 1890, Martin's sister, Mary Catherine, married Henry H. Taylor at the bride's residence, the Bender Ranch, in Kester. The couple had two daughters, Annie Louise, 1891, and Mary Olive, 1893, both born in Guffey.

Longtime Guffey resident Charlie Dell remembers that Henry Taylor was quite a bronco buster. In June 1894, Henry was running a livery stable in Balfour. In July, Henry participated in a fourth of July rodeo event in Balfour, got caught in a rainstorm, contracted pneumonia and died seven days later of heart failure. Henry Taylor was the first of the family to be buried in the Currant Creek Pioneer Cemetery.

Mary Catherine married James Edgar "Ed" Rogers from Missouri, in December 1895. Ed had been a pallbearer at Henry's funeral. In 1899, Ed was the Marshall from Balfour for several years and had the 8-Mile Ranch at the base of Weston Pass. An 1897 issue of The Flume stated that Annie and John Bender visited Mr. and Mrs. Ed Rogers at the 8-Mile Ranch.

The couple went on to have eight more children, six of whom lived full lives, as well as Annie and Olive.

The family lived in Freshwater in 1900 and was in Mesa, Colo. before 1910, where Ed passed away in 1934 and Mary Catherine died in 1953. Both are buried there.

The February 1892 Howbert Happenings in the Flume reported that Mrs. Hannah Hammond, Sr. has been seriously ill, but with careful attendance it is thought she will recover, which she did.

John Bender was a Park County commissioner from Howbert in 1892 and 1893 and he and his brother-in-law Hank Hammond were jurors in 1894.

A December 1893 issue of The Flume reported that Annie Bender's health was not good and her husband John persuaded her to visit California for a rest. The couple spent December 1893 through April 1894 in California most likely visiting Annie's brother George, who had lived with John and Annie in Central City in 1870 and helped with John's dray business there.

George had moved to Santa Clara, Calif. in 1884. He was living in San Diego in 1894. George died in San Diego some time before 1925.

The Flume reported in January 1894 that Hiram S. Witherspoon was taking the place of retiring commissioner Bender. An April 1894, The Flume reported that commissioner Bender and wife were home from California. Annie Bender has been greatly benefited from the trip.

In 1894, Martin represented Kester at the Republican convention along with his uncles Hank Hammond from Kester and Bill Hammond from Balfour. Martin also helped Hank proof his homestead in Fairplay. The 1896 Chaffee County Republican newspaper reported that Martin J. Bender of Balfour spent Sunday in Buena Vista.

Sept. 25, 1897, family matriarch Hannah Hammond died at her son-in-law's residence, the Bender Ranch. She was ill but a short time, reported The Flume, and died at 77 years of age of neuralgia of the heart. Neuralgia is a sharp and proximal pain along the course of a nerve. She leaves her three sons, Henry and William of Park County, George of Rocky Ford, Colo., and her daughter Annie Bender. Hannah is buried in the CCPC next to Henry Taylor.

In November 1897, Martin was married to Inez Myrtle Rogers, the daughter of longtime area ranchers Joe and Lucinda Rogers, in Colorado Springs by minister C.D. Masden. The Guffey Prospector (one of three Guffey newspapers with no known copies in existence) informs us, from The Flume, Nov. 19, 1897, that "Mr. Martin Bender and Miss Inez Rogers were recently married in Colorado Springs. The young couple came from two of the most respected and influential families in the county, and everyone will wish them joy and prosperity."

Family memories say that Inez and Martin were a handsome couple, both very tall and slender.

In December 1897, Martin's sister Hannah Elizabeth married Hardy Clifford Adams in Denver. The couple had eight children. The first was born in Denver 1899, the second and third were born in Hammond. Clifford Martin was born in

1900 and Hazel Elizabeth in 1902. Hazel was the last of the family born on the ranch.

May 1903, Hannah Elizabeth proofed up her 160-acre homestead and the family moved to Mesa, Colo., where the couple had five more children. The last, Archie, was born in April 1908. Shortly after the birth of Archie, Hannah died at the young age of 34 years, probably caused by a respiratory ailment complicated by weakness from childbirth. She is buried in the Mesa cemetery.

Hannah Elizabeth's great grandson is Doug Stiverson. Stiverson has been of enormous help with the research on the Benders and Hammonds, as well as supplying priceless photographs.

In 1898, Martin was serving on a Park County jury and the Jan. 14, issue of the Whitehorn News reported that Martin Bender, proprietor of the Bar W Ranch of South Park, and Adolph Dreifus of Dreifus and Company, stopped on their way to Salida in Guffey. They were guests of Tom Dumphy.

Whitehorn was a mining town in Fremont County, south of Black Mountain. Whitehorn was active around 1900 and Fremont County Road 175 to Salida passes the old town and goes up Willow Creek and crosses the ridge on the north side of Cameron Mountain into Chaffee County. Many ranchers marketed and butchered their cattle at Whitehorn. There is not much left of Whitehorn but a couple of buildings today. Whitehorn information is from Bayou Salado by Virginia McConnell Simmons.

In February 1898, the Canon City Record reported that Mrs. Martin Bender of Carrant Creek was in town visiting, and in July, Martin Bender purchased Al Turner's cattle for \$22 a head.

Nov. 10, 1898, Martin and Inez's first child, Myrtle, was born in Colorado Springs. In November, The Flume reported that Martin Bender had just returned to the ranch from Colorado Springs. Mother and daughter in the springs were doing fine.

Martin, 30 years, Inez, 20 years and Myrtle, one year, were living in Eldred, according to the 1900 United States census. Martin's occupation is listed as a farmer. Also living with the family is Elton "Elk" Smith, 26 years, whose occupation is listed as servant, farm laborer and business partner; and Otto E. Buckles, 27 years, whose occupation was listed as a servant and farm laborer. The property was listed as free and clear.

Interestingly, Martin's uncle Bill Hammond's father-in-law Benjamin Reuben Dell of Currant Creek was listed as an Eldred neighbor running a sawmill there.

Eldred was the halfway stop, one of two stage stops on the Shelf Road, also known as the Cripple Creek Toll Road, built in 1891. Marigold was the other. Eldred was composed of several small one-room log cabins, but they had hot meals, fresh horses, food, supplies and cool drinks for weary travelers, according to Jan MacKell, Cripple Creek District. Eric Freck from Sweden, who settled there in 1887, was the postmaster at Eldred for 15 years and he also sold tobacco and cigars.

June 5, 1900, Martin and Inez's daughter, Josephine, was born in Freshwater. In 1901, Martin proofed his 160-acre homestead located on part of the west side of his grandmother Hannah's homestead. A Denver newspaper reported in 1901 that Annie and John

Bender had attended a carnival in Denver.

After an illness of several months, John Bender died Dec. 1, 1902 of Bright's disease at his brother-in-law George Adam's house in Denver. Bright's disease is an inflammation of the kidneys characterized by the presence of albumin in the urine and high blood pressure. According to Bender's obituary, his devoted and faithful wife Annie never left his side during his last few weeks. She "watched over and tended his every care with untiring love." Bender is buried in the CCPC.

John left a sizeable estate to Annie and his children which included \$12,000, 200 head of cattle, 40 horses, farming equipment and 10,000 shares of a Wyoming oil company, according to Stiverson. Annie received half and Martin, Hannah Elizabeth and Mary Catherine each received one-sixth of the estate.